

Mrs Sarah Gardner  
Homeless Investigations  
Civic Centre  
Duke Street  
Chemsford  
Essex CM1 1JE

Mrs Roseann Sheridan  
C/O Grattan Puxon  
1 John Harper Street  
Colchester CO1 1RP

12 February 2004

RE: REGISTRATION AS HOMELESS/APPLICATION FOR ACCOMMODATION

Dear Mrs Gardener,

My partner Patrick Purcell and I, with our children, registered as Homeless at your office on 23 January, as we were facing eviction from the Meadowlands Caravan Park on 26 January, due to lack of planning permission. Our Planning Application is still with Chelmsford Borough Council.

Your Council's agents, Constant & Co., did serious damage to our caravan, a Lord Munster (valued at £17,000) in the course of taking onto Cranham Road. I had no vehicle capable of towing it. Bryan Lecoche, in charge of the operation, agreed in consultation with the Council (Mrs Christine Lyons?), either 1) to take the caravan to site in Epsom (accompanied by Mr Cliff Codona, chairman of the National Travellers Action Group), or 2) to a storage facility (a mobile home and other caravans were subsequently taken to such a facility at South Mimms).

Neither one of these agreed arrangements were carried out by Mr Lecoche. Instead, my caravan was looted and items of value, including Crown Derby and Waterford glass, were stolen from it – and it was then burned.

In the meantime, we had been allocated temporary accommodation at Silverwoods motel, in Thorrington, near Colchester. We found this completely unsuitable. We found needles and believe drug addicts were there. Our friend Mrs Kathy Buckland saw someone injecting themselves. But we stuck it out, as we had nowhere else to go. After just two nights, we were told we would have to leave as our papers had not been sorted out. We were allowed a third night and then the threat was repeated. Dr Kenrick and the Gypsy Welfare Committee offered to pay £300 for three more nights, which saved us. Still because of the conditions we left and moved into a caravan with friends. We've been living crammed up, eight of us in the one caravan on another caravan park which is also without planning permission. So we are in the same insecure position. They say we are living "illegally" whatever that means. I do not want to say where this is for fear we'll be evicted from there and this caravan park, owned by good Travelling, will be destroyed like Meadowlands was in another ethnic-cleansing operation.

Requests have been made in writing to Chelmsford Borough Police Station to investigate the looting and thefts and the burning of our caravan. But so far they have refused to start any investigation.

I have not yet had any reply to our original application for accommodation, when we said that as Travellers we do not want houses. We want to live together in our family group on a caravan park. We cannot bear to live in houses. This is against our way of life.

I believe my case of homelessness has not been dealt with properly and I therefore wish this to be fully reviewed in the light of all the above circumstances.

Roseann Sheridan